

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
CALIFORNIA ORGANIC PRODUCTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2005
Sacramento, CA

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gay Timmons
Bill Reichle
Fred Rappleye
Joseph Hall
Lauree Bradley
Timothy O'Keefe
Sean Swezey
Stacy Carlsen
Pat Kennelly
Karen Klonsky, Voting Alternate

CDFA REPRESENTATIVES

Rick Jensen
Ray Green
Susan Shelton

INTERESTED PARTIES

Jake Lewin, CCOF
William Bent, USDA
Robert Simas
Betsy Peterson
Heena Patel

ITEM 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Gay Timmons called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. Introductions were made. A quorum was established.

ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 9, 2004 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Tim O'Keefe moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Karen Klonsky seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

ITEM 3: CHAIR REPORT – GAY TIMMONS

Gay Timmons updated the committee regarding the Arthur Harvey lawsuit against Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. Mr. Harvey claimed that the National Organics Program (NOP) regulations were in violation of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) on nine counts. He won three of these counts on appeal. If this decision stands there will be no synthetic materials allowed in organic processing.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has agreed to collaborate with the Natural Science Foundation International on efforts to develop an organic personal care standard that could ultimately receive recognition on the national level. Gay is highly involved in this process and reported that work is ongoing.

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has announced they will be establishing a task force to develop standards for wild-caught and farmed aquatic animals. Task force participants will be both NOSB members and those in the aquatic industry.

ITEM 4: VICE CHAIR REPORT

No report at this time.

ITEM 5: CDFA REPORT – RAY GREEN

A. COST SHARE UPDATE

Ray Green reported that he has been in contact with Bob Pooler of the NOP, regarding the approval of additional funds for the Cost Share Program. CDFA has requested an additional \$110,000 to pay pending applications from October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2004. We have also requested \$500,000 to extend the program for another two years. Negotiations and approval are still pending.

The committee requested further information regarding registration categories and the total amount made within those categories, which have been reimbursed for cost share expenses. DHS and CDFA will supply this information at the next meeting.

B. ENFORCEMENT

Fresno County has recently issued California's first civil penalty under the NOP. Riverside County conducted an investigation that concluded with the certifier sending a proposed revocation. Spot inspection reports are beginning to be received. Ray will compile the information and report at the next COPAC meeting.

C. BUDGET

Ray explained that a budget change proposal could be developed to change the program's spending authority should the CDFA and COPAC decide on the ways to, and associated costs of, increased organic services.

D. SOP POLICY AND PROCESS

The Department has developed draft paragraphs that could be included in notices certifiers are sending to their clients. That draft language is currently being reviewed and fine-tuned by the department.

Gay Timmons mentioned a recent incident regarding an out-of-state certifier that was working with a California producer. The certifier was accredited to work in California; however, they did not realize they also had to be registered in California. It was suggested that CDFA send a letter to all certifiers outlining the additional requirements when working in California.

E. NASOP/NOP WISH LIST

Ray Green is on the Board of Directors for the National Association of State Organic Programs (NASOP). NASOP is gathering ideas and topics for future clarifications and possible amendments to the NOP.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

Ray announced that a new office assistant, Amanda Bourne, has recently been hired. Part of her job responsibilities will be to help with clerical duties for the Organic Program.

Ray explained that the organic mapping project has been put on temporary hold. Yao's work visa expired and CDFA is now looking for another graduate student to take the redesigned database and develop the website.

ITEM 6: DHS REPORT – PAT KENNELLY

Pat Kennelly gave each committee member a copy of the Organic Processed Product Registration Program Report. Detailed information on the following topics were reported:

- Quantity of Organic Product Handled By Commodity Type
- Median and Total Gross Sales Revenues for 2004
- Number of Registrants By Range of Annual Gross Sales Volume
- Number of Organic Registrants Per County
- Listing of all Organic Registrants as of January 2005

Karen Klonsky stated that at the next COPAC meeting she would be presenting a similar report on farmgate. Like the DHS report, this will be given on an annual basis.

ITEM 7: MEMBER REPORTS

Joe Hall passed out an article from the Organic Center for Education and Promotion entitled Elevating Antioxidant Levels in Food Through Organic Farming and Food Processing.

ITEM 8: OLD BUSINESS

Gay Timmons reported that the Budget Subcommittee met informally to discuss ways to utilize the additional program funds. The ideas that resulted from that discussion, and from the general discussion at this meeting were the following:

- Investigative staffing
- Rebate to registrants
- Training
- Mediation/Appeals fund

The subcommittee will hold a teleconference to discuss these ideas and will present a formal proposal to COPAC at the next meeting.

Gay stated that she has been asked to join a roundtable discussion regarding organic issues hosted by CDFA on February 16 & 17, 2005. She explained that she is going to wait until after these meetings before drafting the letter regarding genetic engineering to the Secretary.

ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS

Bill Bent from USDA explained that until the Arthur Harvey case is completed all would be kept status quo regarding the current use of synthetic materials. He also reported that he has noticed the trend of compliance cases are moving from the general U.S. to around the borders and worldwide.

MOTION: Gay Timmons moved to nominate and appoint Joe Hall as COPAC Chairman. Karen Klonsky seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

MOTION: Sean Swezey moved to nominate and appoint Bill Reichle as COPAC Vice-Chairman. Tim O'Keefe seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

The next meeting was moved from May 3, 2005 to May 17, 2005. The meeting will be held in Sacramento and will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Jake Lewin from California Certified Organic Farmers asked if COPAC was still planning on having a consumer listening session. It was decided that this listening session would be held directly following the May 17th COPAC meeting.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ray Green, Supervisor
Organic Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch
Inspection Services